## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.    An access point, comprising:

an ISP network interface coupling the access point to the Internet;

a wireless network interface that permits one or more guests to obtain Internet access via wireless transmissions with the access point;

authentication and authorization logic that identifies if a guest is approved to use the access point, and further identifies a guest's privilege level; and

wherein a host configures the authentication and authorization logic to identify usage permitted for each privilege level.

2.    The access point of claim 1, wherein unauthenticated guests are provided with a basic level of service.

3.    The access point of claim 2, wherein the basic level of service comprises permitting the unauthenticated guest to access the website of the host.

4.    The access point of claim 1, wherein an unauthenticated guest is provided with a message via redirection informing the unauthenticated guest it is not authenticated and describing how the unauthenticated guest with a procedure to obtain authentication.

5.    The access point of claim 1, wherein the host configures the authentication and authorization logic with at least two privilege levels comprising a low level privilege and a high level privilege.

6.    The access point of claim 5, wherein the low level privilege restricts the guest from accessing web sites or services that consume a high level of bandwidth, and the high level of privilege permits the guest to access the high bandwidth level web sites or services.

7.    The access point of claim 6, further comprising packet monitor logic that determines type of usage for each guest.

8.    The access point of claim 7, further comprising metering logic that quantifies the type of usage for guests on a cumulative basis.

9.    The access point of claim 1, further comprising quality of service probes that measure the quality of Internet service provided guests.

10.    The access point of claim 5 wherein the host configures the authentication and authorization logic with time limits associated with respect to said at least two privilege levels.

11.    A method of providing guests with Internet service, comprising:
        detecting a request for Internet access from a guest;
        determining if the guest is permitted to use the Internet service;
        if the guest is permitted to use the Internet service, determining a privilege level for the guest;
            identifying if the request for Internet access from the guest exceeds that
                guest's privilege level; and
            providing the requested Internet access if the guest has the appropriate
                privilege level for the requested access.

12.    The method of claim 11, wherein the guest is provided with a basic service if the requested access exceeds the guest's privilege level.

13.    The method of claim 12 wherein a local host determines what constitutes the basic service.

14.    The method of claim 13 wherein the host determines a number of privilege levels, the services available at each privilege level, and the pricing schedule for each privilege level.

15.    The method of claim 11, wherein multiple guests may request and receive Internet service at substantially the same time.

16.    An access point, comprising:

an ISP network interface coupling the access point to an Internet Service Provider;

a wireless network interface that permits multiple guests to substantially simultaneously obtain Internet access via wireless transmissions with the access point;

packet monitor logic that determines a guest's type of Internet usage;

authorization logic that is configured by a host to identify levels of privilege and type of usage permitted for each privilege level.

17.    The access point of claim 16, further comprising a local area network interface that couples the access point to a local area network to permit the host or one or more guests to couple to the access point via the local area network.

18.    The access point of claim 16, further comprising a web server interface that permits the access point to access and retrieve web pages, and a firewall that prevents external Internet users from disrupting operation of the access point.

19.    The access point of claim 16, further comprising a RADIUS client that permits a guest to obtain remote authentication and authorization to use the access point.

20.    The access point of claim 16, further comprising dynamic host configuration protocol logic that supplies an independent IP address to each of said multiple guests.

21.  An access point that permits multiple guests to obtain Internet access, comprising:

>  means for interfacing said access point with the multiple guests;
>
>  means for coupling the access point to the Internet;
>
>  means for monitoring requests made by a guest to determine type of usage requested by that guest;
>
>  means for configuring said access point with multiple privilege levels that differ based on type of use; and
>
>  means for determining if a guest's privilege level exceeds a guest's requested type of use.

22.  The access point of claim 21, further comprising means for preventing external users from improperly accessing the access point or the multiple guests.

23.  The access point of claim 22, further comprising means for quantitatively measuring the type of usage of the multiple guests on a cumulative basis.

24.  The access point of claim 23, further comprising means for interfacing said access point with a local area network, thereby enabling the multiple guests to access electronic files maintained or retrieved via the local area network.